GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:342
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2014
HIGHER EDUCATION
Hari Shri G.

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the existing mechanism put in place by the University Grants Commission (UGC) for maintenance of standards of teaching, research and qualities in higher education in the universities/colleges including private universities;

(b) whether the Government/UGC proposes to review the existing regulatory mechanism in the field of higher education; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the steps taken by the Government/UGC to meet the emerging challenges of higher education sector?

Answer

MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SMT. SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (c): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 342 FOR 17.12.2014 ASKED BY SHRI G. HARI, HON'BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT REGARDING HIGHER EDUCATION

(a): The University Grants Commission (UGC) has informed that it undertakes maintenance of standards in teaching and research and quality assurance in Universities, Deemed to be Universities and Colleges through the following mechanisms, namely: framing regulations and schemes and; disbursing grants to the eligible institutions.

The UGC supports access & expansion by financing development of the Central Universities, recognition of new State Universities and Colleges, regulation of private and deemed to be universities and establish- ment of Community Colleges. The UGC conducts inspection of private universities These Private Universities are also inspected by the UGC with the help of Expert Committees, constituted by the UGC, which includes representatives from the concerned Statutory Council(s), to check their compliance with the laid down regulations and gives them opportunity for rectification of defects and non-conformity with the regulations.

The UGC has notified several regulations with the objective of sustenance and improvement in the quality of higher education and for undertaking academic reforms. The regulations are on the following matters, namely: mandatory assessment and accreditation of higher educational institutions; affiliation of colleges by universities; regulation of private and deemed to be universities; minimum qualifications for appointment of teachers; minimum standards for grant of first degree, Master's degree, M.Phil/Ph.D; grievance redressal; promotion of equity; curbing the menace of ragging etc. The regulations are available at http://www.ugc.ac.in/page/UGC-Regulations.aspx.

The UGC also laid down a list of Degrees specified for the Purposes of Section 22 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956. No other degree can be granted by a University/College and Institutions empowered to grant degrees by an Act of Parliament.

In order to encourage research and development in the country, UGC has laid out schemes, awards, fellowships, chairs and programmes under which financial assistance is provided to institutions of higher education as well as faculty members working therein to undertake quality research covering areas of knowledge across disciplines including revival & promotion of indigenous languages. These schemes are the following, namely:Universities with Potential for Excellence (UPE); Centre with Potential for Excellence in Particular Area: (CPEPA); Special Assistance Programme (SAP); Research Projects; Basic Science Research; JRF & Non-NET Fellowships; post doctoral fellowship for young Indian scholars for international collaborative research opportunities, etc. The UGC has established seven Inter University Centres in the country for providing common facilities, services and programmes for universities in general.

The UGC has also informed that it has launched the following schemes for making higher education relevant to the needs of the society and industry, namely: Career Oriented Programmes (COC), Community Colleges (CC) and introduction of degrees in vocational subjects in line with National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF). The UGC, through collaboration with National Mission on Education thought ICT (NMEICT), has undertaken e-content development of post graduate programmes called e-PG Pathashala.

(b) & (c): Yes, Madam. The Government has constituted a University Grants Commission (UGC) Review Committee on 30th July,

2014 under the Chairmanship of Prof. Hari Gautam, former Chairman of UGC for restructuring the UGC and reshaping its educational leadership and regulatory role to address imperatives and challenges in the higher education sector for fullest realization of the higher learning and research potential in the country. While the UGC has endeavoured to regulate the higher education system in the country and promote quality and access, it was felt that the UGC could have done better, if it were strengthened and re- structured. The UGC has no mechanism to ensure follow up on regulatory instructions and enforce compliance with it. This inadequacy is on account of the limitations in its structure and processes.. UGC's entire functioning continues to be oriented more towards grant giving rather than regulation and enforcement of minimum standards. These limitations can only be overcome by a thorough review and amending the UGC Act, 1956 to meet the emerging challenges in the higher education sector.

The Committee is mandated to conduct a review of the present status of UGC and suggest restructuring and re-organizing of UGC for attaining even better performance to meet the desired objectives. The Committee is also mandated to suggest amendments to the U G C Act, 1956, and the Rules and Regulations made thereunder. The Terms of Reference of the Committee are at http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/ upload_files/mhrd/files/RevUGC_0.pdf .

The Government has also constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of Shri M.K. Kaw, Ex- Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Develop- ment for a review of the All India Council of Technical Education.